GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:786
ANSWERED ON:22.10.2008
. INCREASE OF QUOTA FOR HAJ PILGRIMS
Deora Shri Milind Murli;Murmu Shri Hemlal

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has requested the Saudi Arabian Government to increase the quota for Haj for the year 2008;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Saudi Government thereto;

(c) the details of the break-up of charges for the pilgrims as well as the contribution by the Government; and

(d) the details of the arrangements likely to be made by the Government for comfortable stay of the pilgrims?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) Yes.

(b) The Government of India had requested the Royal Government of Saudi Arabia to provide an additional quota of 15,000 seats to India for Haj 2008 in response to which, quota for India has been increased by 10,991 seats. Thus, the total quota for India for Haj 2008 is 167,991 as compared to 157,000 for Haj 2007.

(c)-(d) Depending upon the category of accommodation provided, a pilgrim is required to pay a sum ranging from Rs. 73,759 to Rs.84,240 each, towards accommodation/ transportation charges and Moallim fees. Besides that each pilgrim would be paying a sum of Rs. 12700 towards air fare for the return trip to Jeddah and miscellaneous dues. The balance of the airfare would be provided by the Government to Air India as Haj subsidy. The Government of India make elaborate arrangements for the welfare of Haj pilgrims and strive to improve the facilities provided to them every year. Besides facilitating the transportation, accommodation and other logistical support for the Haj pilgrims going to Saudi Arabia through the Haj Committee of India, a large contingent of seasonal local staff, supervisors, data entry operators, drivers and messengers is appointed by Consulate General of India, Jeddah during Haj period to assist in Haj arrangements. Besides that a contingent of about 600 personnel comprising Coordinators, doctors and nurses and other para-medical staff, Assistant Haj Officers, Haj Assistants, and about 200 Khadim-ul-Hujjaj, are sent every year from India on short-term deputation to Saudi Arabia. Extensive medical orientation is provided to the pilgrims in the community centres set up in Makkah and Madinah by the Consulate General of India, Jeddah which sets up two hospitals and various branch offices-cum-dispensaries in Makkah and Madina for Haj pilgrims. Medical teams are deputed at Jeddah Airport to provide round the clock medical assistance to Haj pilgrims. Medicines provided at these dispensaries and hospital are being supplied from India and procured locally. Seventeen ambulances were pressed into service last year. A system of First Information Report is followed in the case of all the pilgrims who are 70+ years of age in order to ensure that the concerned pilgrims receive specialised medical care. The Government also makes arrangeme! nts in India for polio, meningitis and influenza vaccinations for the pilgrims.The Government provide adequate funds every year for these requirements. The Haj Committee of India in coordination with the State Haj Committees provides to the pilgrims information regarding confirmation of their seats, travel documents, transportation, accommodation, release of foreign exchange, embarkation points and departure dates etc.